MASCULINITY AND GENDER IN KANNADA TELEVISION COMMERCIALS: A CRITICAL STUDY

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1. Introduction

It is said that the prosperity of the society can be understood from the position of its women. Women's issues should not be treated as separate matter; instead it should be included in the socio political economic reforms. But women across the world face daunting challenges, lower income and educational level, inferior legal rights and family responsibilities. Gender inequality is a common epidemic existing in all societies and cultures of the world in different forms. Each culture has their fixed roles, norms and more assigned for each gender which has to strictly adhere to. The issues of gender inequality have received special significance in the past two decades, particularly after the mandate given by the United Nations, including the Beijing Platform for Action and as part of the Millennium Development Goals.

Despite greater international awareness about gender issues, it is a sad reality that no country has yet managed significantly to eliminate gender gap from their respective societies (Augusto and Saadia: 2005). Many development efforts over the years have tried to empower women with varying degree of success. Gender empowerment is conceived as a process by which women can overcome many of the hurdles that they face such as education, healthcare, work status, employment opportunity, social security, position in decision making by virtue of their gender.

The power of mass media to say has grown manifold with the invention of new technologies especially in the field of communication. Along with the cultures, customs, traditions or institutions mass media too has a mammoth task in shaping our perceptions and views regarding social reality. It is a known fact that media continuously feed messages which may not cover all aspects of reality. The Mac Bride Commission had also reported that there are few women in authoritative positions. The commission said that among 3000 film directors only 23 were women in USA. Thus the status of women can be realized across the globe. As Pandey & Charu (2012) stated that, the status of women in a society is an index of the civilization.

Media influences the economic social political as well as the religious facts which in turn have great impact upon the level of reacting, acting, thinking or working media infuses the

people with all the latest information and stimulates the need for sustainable growth in the present day society. Schramm & Osgood's 'Bucket communication' suggests that films, television, music and so on loads us with information. These information may or may or be relevant for us and might create negative influence upon society.

Thus the portrayal of women in media became the matter concern as men and women are being mostly portrayed as objects in television either to sell their products or service or to increase the rating point. In this background the research study on masculinity and gender discrimination in Kannada television channels gain an importance.

2. Review of Literature

A literature review offers far more than just a rundown of the related sources. Reviewing includes analyzing individual sources as well as synthesizing these sources to obtain a wide field view. In essence, a review of literature defines reviews and synthesizes the applicable literature within a specific research field. It illuminates how knowledge within the field has grown, highlighting what has already been achieved, what is widely accepted, what is evolving and what is the current state of thought on the subject. Furthermore, a literature review describes a research void and articulates how the void is resolved by a specific research project.

Reviews are done in five major categories

1. Advertisements
2. Gender and masculinity in society
3. Gender stereotypes elements in ads
4. Mass Media and Gender
5. Impact of Gendered Media

Advertisements

Vestergaard & Schroder, (1985) claimed that Content contributes to the Fulfillment of the material needs of individuals, social needs and goods purchased by individuals 38 are an indicator of their character. They further claimed that advertisement is like a public announcement to encourage the sale of goods and services.

V Srishti & T Nidhi (2016) says that, a big name support helps in building trust and prompts brand review just as pulling in new clients. Superstars are the fundamental motivation behind why individuals consider in purchasing the item.

Gender and masculinity in society

Alfred Adler (1956) mentioned that young boys need extreme love and passionate Bonding in their youth, however guardians regularly don't give satisfactory consideration required, which is frequently given to a young lady. Henceforth there builds up a mind boggling and a 'drive for power' which is the base for hyper manly force.

Davis Evans & Robert (2006) have claimed that, Sex is a social structure in which the men are privileged and women are not at a disadvantage. They believed that gender mainstreaming had to be encouraged by continuous assessment and monitoring to ensure equality between the sexes.

Gender stereotypes elements in ads

Bartel (1988) have mentioned that, Cosmetics and other beauty goods ads portray attractive women as they want to attract people to attain such beauty as seen in advertising. The author said these ads don't work to tell for men, children or any other group. Thus, the appearance myth is expressed against the female people through female protagonists.

Banerjee Shourini & Kakade Onkargouda (2016) have reported in their study on 14 Prime time TV Advertisements that they reflect a stereotyped image in which Smelling and good looking elevates a person's standing in society. They noted that the advertisements reinforced that it is important to transmit the manliness or femininity through using body frames or by using particular items.

Mass Media and Gender

Margaret Gallagher‟s (1979) UNESCO-funded study said that Media are considered to be very effective socializing agents and bring about social change through the portrayal of role models, status, personal meanings, behaviors and stereotypes.

Das Ajay (2009) has pointed out that the marketers are "likely" to use stereotypes as a marketing tactic for goods. He has also pointed out that men are depicted as being aggressive, decisive, brave and smart.

Impact of Gendered Media

Geis, Brown, Jennings and Porter (1984) had conducted a study on 160 respondents from where they found that those respondents who watched commercials were more likely to be home-bound and more interested in household chores than in career growth.

Sharma Pooja & Gupta Priya (2015) in a survey on the preferences of these of

Commercials found out that women's viewers demonstrated their desire for "interest and family-based themes," while men chose "a more individualistic theme of jealousy and eroticism" to "family or culture-based themes."

In nutshell, the studies claimed that there is significance difference found in the portrayal of Male and female characters in the Television advertisements. Researchers revealed that Media content regarding the Television commercials are not found gender sensitive and lot more is expected to change in this scenario.

3. Need for the Study

This study is designed to examine and study the coverage of gender discrimination and the portrayal of masculinity through advertising. The problem with the unequal distribution of gender roles and behaviors in our culture is. In turn, these wreak havoc in society in the name of crime, violence against women. The advertisers must boom consumers to sell the products and services and push on certain prejudiced ideas that affect society's harmony. The representation of male advertising in the media primarily affects male and female psyches alike. Gender Disparity is a big problem in achieving India's development target. India is a democratic country with a large number of mass media and numerous advertisements being telecast, so exploring the impact of advertising in this regard will be fruitful in understanding the themes infused by advertisements to emanate differences between the sexes. Considering the following things, a review of Kannada Television channels' advertising is taken up.

There are several studies in all kinds of media that focused on the role of women but there were few studies that focused on the male aspect of media. Following the review, numerous studies have already been performed in the western countries. It was therefore deemed important that a research in the field of television advertising bear fruitful results in this area.

The thesis would examine the nature of gender roles, and how it is perpetuated by advertisements. The research is also important for examining the relationships between men and women that are represented by the mass media as advertising is part of convincing communication with that discrimination, the position of the media must be evaluated.

4. Statement of the Problem

Numerous studies have been performed on the effect of ads on women. The marketing aspects of the commercials are greatly studied. Therefore, a media analysis of gender stereotypes is much required to understand how ads depict false and hyped gendered characters that ultimately contribute to male heroism and dominance being promoted. Therefore, **"MASCULINITY AND GENDER IN KANNADA TELEVISION COMMERCIALS: A CRITICAL STUDY"** has been taken up to understand the content of advertisements in Vernacular TV Channels and analyze it further deep. The study will explore, observe and examine the content of the commercials and how the gender stereotyped themes are infused in it with following objectives:

5. Research Objectives

1. To assess the content and pattern of TV Commercials upon men and women in the construction of masculinity
2. To identify the trend of objectifying men and women
3. To analyse the feminine image, body language and character role portrayal in Kannada TV channels
4. To analyse the relationship of male character with other characters in TV shows
5. To study how TV channels are glorifying masculinity
6. To know the portrayal of women in Kannada TV channels
7. To find ways to eliminate gender based discrimination in television channels
8. To explore various methods of establishing gender equality in media
9. To explain the impact of TV channels on the society
10. To give a note on media reforms regarding image of women in Kannada TV channels

6. Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the portrayal of Male and Female characters in Food product Advertisements.
2. There is no significant difference in the portrayal of Male and Female characters in Cosmetics product Advertisements.
3. There is no significant difference in the portrayal of Male and Female characters of Electronic product Advertisement.
4. There is no significant difference in the portrayal of Male and Female characters in Clothing/Shoes product Advertisements.
5. There is no significant difference in the portrayal of Male and Female characters in Household product Advertisements.
6. There is no significant difference in the portrayal of Male and Female characters of Personal Hygiene product advertisements.
7. There is no significant difference in the portrayal of Male and Female characters of Baby product Advertisements.

7. Significance of the Study

Through the Advertisements advertising material will play a significant role in influencing people's social attitudes and social behaviors. Continuous exposure to such traits and behaviors within society produces stereotypes. The researchers also shown that audience are much desensitized when they are subjected to repeated images of crime, sex and stereotypes. Most of the stereotype comes from women's stereotyping as a sex object, focusing on appearance and beauty. Such photos lead girls and women to guilt, anxiety and low self-esteem. Masculinity or the problems of gender fall under developmental purview. It plays a crucial role in formulating and enforcing policies for socio-economic - political and cultural growth. Modern culture remains stuck in the debate of masculinity and femininity. In fact, masculinity is the core of the as it is the foundation upon which the domestic and public patriarchy is founded. Therefore, as the Women Empowerment debate comes up, it needs a deeper understanding as to why the injustice still exists in our society.

Through this study, the content and theme of the advertisements pertaining to masculinity and stereotyped gender notions can be understood. Advertisements comprise of the audio-visual medium wherein the visuals create a larger impact. Role played by advertisements in promoting the stereotyped notions is studied in this research activity. The study will help the policy makers and gender activists to implement proper policies and a censorship on stereotyped advertisements thus paving the way for a gender-equal society.

The study of masculinity is not only confined to advertisements or films. Literature has enormous evidences of the male power and the undermining of women's status. The societal evils can be subdued only when awareness about the traditional notions of masculinity and femininity can be created and will enable the advertisers to be more gender-conscious while producing the commercials.

It is necessary in the present circumstances to make the problems of gender discrimination and gender inequality such that the status quo can be maintained for the roles of both a man and a woman. By presenting more gender equity issues in all types of media, the unequal role of men and women in society can be reduced. Women's options in every field are challenged and in most cases compromised, whether it be in the workplace, the educational sector or home front. Sex stereotypes often portrayed in the media reinforce the disparity that exists in the conventional patriarchal culture in which we live. Therefore, a analysis of the gender roles and disparities portrayed in advertising may be useful to research and assist advertisers, policy makers and men and women alike in their behavioral aspects.

8. Methodology

The Methodology gives a broader perspective and insight of the process of collection of data for investigation. This forms a pivotal part of any research activity undertaken. A research design describes the techniques of selecting the problem, identifying the gaps, techniques for collecting samples, formulating a budget and stating of the findings in an objective manner.

Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research is an excellent approach to view and analyze media content. The Qualitative research design has provided an in-depth study of the television commercials and the minute details of its content. The qualitative method was used in the conduct of literature survey, research goals development, validation and study goals attainment. A clarification has been given on the overall methodology and rationale for qualitative method selection.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a very popular used research tool to quantify the media content. It is the systematic categorization of the media or communication content as per predetermined categories. Written or visual content is measured objectively and systematically. As Creswell (1994) has mentioned that Content Analysis is inexpensive, deals with current events and can be quantified. Before 1940‟s Content Analysis was quantitative analysis of documentary materials which can be identified and counted but now, it is mostly qualitative. The methodology adopted for this study is content analysis. Content Analysis is a popular method to understand communication. It began with Berelson (1952) and slowly it was adapted to several disciplines. Content Analysis inculcates special procedure to replicate and thoroughly analyse the data and its context. As followed by Das (2000), Siu and Au (1998), Courtney and Whipple (1983) is the most popular used technique to evaluate the role of gender in advertisements. Hence, for this study also Content Analysis was chosen. Courtney and Whipple (1983) have stated that, “content analysis has been the chief method of measuring gender stereotyping in advertisements”.

The study is an effort undertaken to explore and critically evaluate different forms of portrayal of men and women that were broadcast in Kannada Television channels. The qualitative research design has adopted for the study which include in-depth analysis of content of Kannada TV Commercials. The methodology adopted for this study is content analysis.

In-depth interview

Structured Interview Schedule was prepared to interview six experts those were associated with Advertisement making in an Advertisement agency. The very important purpose of in-depth interview was to get the opinion of the experts regarding the role of gender in conceptualizing

and making of an advertisement with or without gendered notions. Ad is part of the mass marketing media, and it has a lot of influence and effect on the people. The in-depth interview is thus deemed appropriate in order to understand their perception of gender roles as the theme for marketing the goods and services. Questionnaire was primarily focused to arrive at the opinion of the experts about Gender issues in advertisements of Hindi Channels.

Method of Data Collection

The goal of the research is to study the qualitative aspect of the representation of masculinity and gender discrimination in ads. The approach is mainly content review of advertisements and in-depth interview with leading advertising experts to help the results.

Structured observation of non-participants was employed to critically analyze each advertisement. A collection of codes has been devised which provides the basis for detailed observation and analysis of the advertisements.

Television commercials of Kannada channels have been taken up for study. The channels have been selected from 5 Genres of Television channels through the process of Multi-Stage Sampling. The genres are- Entertainment, News, Film, music and Sports. From each genre the channel with high TRP has been taken up.

9. Limitations of the Study

Limitations are inevitable in any piece of research investigation. One of the Limitations is student researchers face financial constraint so it may not be possible to cover all channels. Study has been decided to carried out on Kannada TV Channels hence the coverage of several other channels may not be possible in this research act.

The study is limited to commercials of regional channels. The research act has incorporated 5 television channels of different genres with the language being Kannada only hence the result found cannot be generalized for the commercials telecasted in the rest of the TV Channels.

Apart from that, availability of former studies to formulate literature review was a major constraint, especially with respect to Masculinity in Indian gender studies. Power constrain may also be considered as one of the limitation of study.

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